

REMARKS

This Reply is in response to the Final Office Action mailed on November 9, 2004, in which Claims 1-3, 6-10, 12-17, and 19-21 were rejected. With this response, entry of amendments to Claims 1, 8, and 15 are requested. The requested amendments to Claims 1, 8, and 15 correspond to similar limitations already found in Claim 21. Accordingly, no new issues are believed to be raised by such amendments and entry is believed to be appropriate. Applicants request that the rejection of Claim 21 be withdrawn. Claims 1-3, 6-10, 12-17, and 19-21, as amended, are presented for reconsideration and allowance.

I. Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 21 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) Based Upon Hashimoto.

Page 2 of the Office Action rejected Claims 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,445,903). The rejection of Claim 21 is improper and should be withdrawn. Claim 18 is cancelled. Claims 1, 8 and 15, as amended, overcome the rejection based upon Hashimoto.

A. Claim 21.

Claim 21, without further amendment, recites an apparatus which includes a printer device configured to print an image upon a medium, an output tray, a media driver and a director. The media driver is configured to engage and move the printed upon medium along a first path in a first direction to an output tray and is also configured to engage and move the printed upon media along a first path in a second opposite direction towards one of a second media path and a third media path, wherein the third media path leads to a stacker. The director is configured to move between a first position in which the printed upon media is directed into the second media path and a second position in which the printed upon medium is directed into the third media path.

Hashimoto et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,445,903, fails to disclose an apparatus which includes a media driver configured to engage and move a printed upon medium along a first path in a first direction to an output tray and to also drive and engage the printed upon medium along the first path in a second opposite direction towards one of a second media

path and a third media path, wherein the third media path leads to a stacker, in conjunction with a director that is movable between a first position in which the printed upon media is directed into the second media path and a second position in which the printed upon medium is directed into the third media path. In rejecting Claim 21, the Office Action characterizes gate members 10a and 10b of Hashimoto as the recited director. However, neither gate member 10a nor gate member 10b engage media as it is being driven in a reverse direction (the recited second direction) towards stacker 2. In contrast, media being driven in the reverse or second direction by roller pair 18 is channeled by divergent point P in the pull-in passage 13a to stacker 2 (see col. 6, lines 58-65). The sheet being reversed through reversed sheet exhausting passage 13b to stacker 2 never contacts gate 10b or gate 10a. Thus, neither gate 10a nor gate 10b (characterized as the claimed director in the Office Action) anticipate Claim 21 which recites that the director is movable to a second position in which media being driven by the media driver in the second direction (reverse direction) is directed into the third path leading to the stacker.

Moreover, the surface or structure disclosed by Hashimoto providing divergent point P cannot be properly characterized as the claimed director since this structure does not move between a first position to direct media being driven by the media driver in the second (reverse) direction into the second path and a second position in which the media being driven by the media driver in the second (reverse) direction is directed into the third path. The structure providing divergent P of Hashimoto is not movable. Thus, the rejection of Claim 21 based upon Hashimoto is improper and should be withdrawn.

B. Claims 1, 3 and 15.

Applicants respectfully request entry of amendments to Claims 1, 3 and 15 which add limitations similar to those limitations already found in Claim 21. In particular, Applicants respectfully request entry of amendments to Claims 1, 3 and 15 which further clarify that the media sheet is selectively directed to either the second path or the third path while the media sheet is being moved in the second or reverse direction.

As noted above with respect to Claim 21, Hashimoto et al. fails to disclose moving a director or re-director between two positions to selectively direct media moving in the second or reverse direction to either a second path or a third path leading to a stacker. Neither gate member 10a nor gate 10b (characterized as the re-director in the Office Action) engage or direct media when the media is being moved in the second or reverse direction. In contrast, the structure forming divergent point P in Hashimoto only engages the sheet of media being moved in a reverse direction through reverse sheet exhausting passage 13b. This structure does not move and only directs the reverse sheet of media to a single path which leads to stacker 2. Thus, Claims 1, 8 and 15, as amended, overcome the rejection based upon Hashimoto. Claims 3, 5, 10, 12 and 17 depend from Claims 1, 8 and 15 and overcome the rejection for the same reasons.

II. Rejection of Claims 2, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 19 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Based On Hashimoto and Muraoka.

Page 3 of the Office Action rejected Claims 2, 6, 9, 13, 16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,445,903) in view of Muraoka et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,353,727). Claims 2 and 6, Claims 9 and 13 and Claims 16 and 19 depend from Claims 1, 8 and 15, respectively, and overcome the rejection for the same reasons discussed above with respect to Claims 1, 8 and 15.

III. Rejection of Claims 7, 14 and 20 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Based Upon Hashimoto and Katsuyama.

Page 3 of the Office Action rejected Claims 7, 14 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,445,903) in view of Katsuyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,690,901). Claims 7, 14 and 20 depend from Claims 1, 8 and 15, respectively, and overcome the rejection for the same reasons discussed above with respect to Claims 1, 8 and 15.

IV. Conclusion.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-3, 6-10, 12-17, and 19-21 are now pending in this application.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 08-2025. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 08-2025. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 08-2025.

Respectfully submitted,

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